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INTENSITIES OF FEELING: TOWARDS A SPATIAL POLITICS OF AFFECT

by
Nigel Thrift

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ABSTRACT. This paper attempts to take the politics of affect as not just incidental but central to the life of cities, given that cities are thought of as inhuman or transhuman entities and that politics is understood as a process of community without unity. It is in three main parts. The first part sets out the main approaches to affect that conform with this approach. The second part considers the ways in which the systematic engineering of affect has become central to the political life of Euro-American cities, and why. The third part then sets out the different kinds of progressive politics that might become possible once affect is taken into account. There are some brief conclusions.

Key words: affect, politics, space

> Nobody knows how many rebellions besides political rebellions ferment in the masses of life which people earth
> *Jane Eyre*, 1847/1993 p. 115

Introduction

Cities may be seen as roiling maelstroms of affect. Particular affects such as anger, fear, happiness and joy are continually on the boil, rising here, subsiding there, and these affects continually manifest themselves in events which can take place either at a grand scale or simply as a part of continuing everyday life.[1] So, on the heroic side, we might point to the mass hysteria occasioned by the death of Princess Diana or the deafening roar from a sports stadium when a crucial point is scored. On the prosaic side we might think of the mundane emotional labour of the workplace, the frustrated shouts and gestures of road rage, the delighted laughter of children as they tour a theme park, or the tears of a suspected felon undergoing police interrogation.[2]

Given the utter ubiquity of affect as a vital element of cities, its shading of almost every urban activity with different hues that we all recognise, you would think that the affective register would form a large part of the study of cities – but you would be wrong.[3] Though affect continually figures in many accounts it is usually off to the side. There are a few honourable exceptions, of course. Walter Benjamin's identification of the emotional immediacy of Nazi rallies comes to mind. So does Richard Sennett's summoning of troubled urban bodies in *Flesh and Stone*. But, generally speaking, to read about affect in cities it is necessary to resort to the pages of novels, and the tracklines of poems.

Why this neglect of the affective register of cities? It is not as if there is no history of the study of affect. There patently is, and over many centuries. For example, philosophers have continually debated the place of affect. Plato's discussion of the role of artists comes to mind as an early instance: for Plato art was dangerous because it gave an outlet for the expression of uncontrolled emotions and feelings. In particular, drama is a threat to reason because it appeals to emotion.[4] No doubt one could track forward through pivotal figures such as Machiavelli, Rousseau, Kant and Hegel, noting various rationalist and romantic reactions, depending upon whether (and which) passions are viewed favourably or with suspicion[5]. Similarly, though at a much later date, scientists have recognised the importance of affect. At least since the publication of Charles Darwin's (1998) *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* in 1872, and no doubt before that, there has been a continuous history of the systematic scientific study of affect, and although it would be foolish to say that we now know all there is to know about the physiology of emotions, equally it would be foolish to say that we know nothing. In turn, literatures such as these have been replete with all kinds of more or less explicit political judgements – about which passions are wholesome and which are suspect or even dangerous, about the degree to which passions can or should be allowed untrammelled licence, and about how passions can be amplified or repressed.

So why the neglect of affect in the current urban literature, even in the case of issues such as identity and belonging which quiver with affective energy? A series of explanations come to mind. One is a residual cultural Cartesianism (replete with all kinds of gendered connotations): affect is a kind of frivolous or distracting background to the real work of

deciding our way through the city. It cannot be a part of our intelligence of that world. Another is concerned with the cultural division of labour. The creative arts already do that stuff and there is no need to follow. A third explanation is that affect figures mainly in perceptual registers like proprioception which are not easily captured in print. No doubt other explanations could be mustered.

Perhaps, at one time, these may have been seen as valid reasons, but they are not any more. I would point to three reasons why neglecting affect is, as much now as in the past, criminal neglect. First, systematic knowledges of the creation and mobilisation of affect have become an integral part of the everyday urban landscape: affect has become part of a reflexive loop which allows more and more sophisticated interventions in various registers of urban life. Second, these knowledges are not only being deployed knowingly, they are also being deployed politically (mainly but not only by the rich and powerful) to political ends: what might have been painted as aesthetic is increasingly instrumental. Third, affect has become a part of how cities are understood. As cities are increasingly expected to have 'buzz', to be 'creative', and to generally bring forth powers of invention and intuition, all of which can be forged into economic weapons, so the active engineering of the affective register of cities has been highlighted as the harnessing of the talent of transformation. Cities must exhibit intense expressivity. Each of these three reasons shows that, whereas affect has always, of course, been a constant of urban experience, now affect is more and more likely to be actively engineered with the result that it is becoming something more akin to the networks of pipes and cables that are of such importance in providing the basic mechanics and root textures of urban life (Armstrong, 1999), a set of constantly performing relays and junctions that are laying down all manner of new emotional histories and geographies.

In this paper I want to think about affect in cities and about affective cities, and, above all, about what the political consequences of thinking more explicitly about these topics might be – once it is accepted that the 'political decision is itself produced by a series of inhuman or pre-subjective forces and intensities' (Spinks, 2001, p. 24) which the idea of 'man' has reduced to ciphers. My aims will be threefold: to discuss the nature of affect, to show some of the ways in which cities and affect interact to produce a politics which cannot be reduced to simply a shifting field of communal self-reflection or the neat conceptual economy of an ideology, and to produce the beginnings of a synoptic commentary. Accordingly, in the first part of the paper, I will describe some of the different positions that have been taken on what affect actually is. This is clearly not an inconsequential exercise and it has a long and complex history which takes in luminaries as different as Spinoza and Darwin and Freud. But, given the potential size of the agenda, this has meant pulling out four key traditions rather than providing a complete review. This work of definition over, in the second part of the paper I will then describe some of the diverse ways in which the use and abuse of various affective practices is gradually changing what we regard as the sphere of 'the political'. In particular, I will point to four different but related ways in which the manipulation of affect for political ends is becoming not just widespread but routine in cities through new kinds of practices and knowledges which are also redefining what counts as the sphere of the political. These practices, knowledges and redefinitions are not all by any means nice or cuddly, which is one all too common interpretation of what adding affect will contribute. Indeed, some of them have the potential to be downright scary. But this is part and parcel of why it is so crucial to address affect now: in at least one guise the discovery of new means of practicing affect is also the discovery of a whole new means of manipulation by the powerful. In the subsequent part of the paper, I will focus more explicitly on the way in which these developments are changing what we may think of as both politics and 'the political', using the four traditions that I outlined previously. I will not be making the silly argument that just about everything which now turns up is political, in some sense or the other, but I will be arguing that the move to affect shows up new political registers and intensities, and allows us to work on them to brew new collectives in ways which at least have the potential to be progressive. Then, in the penultimate part of the paper, I will briefly consider in more detail some of the kinds of progressive political interventions into affect that might legitimately be made, using the ideas stimulated by recent work on virtual art and, most notably, the work of Bill Viola. Finally, I present some too brief conclusions which argue that the current experiments with a 'cosmopolitics' of new kinds of encounter and conviviality must include affect.

In writing this paper in such a way that it does not simply become a long and rather dry review, I have had to make some draconian decisions. First, in

general I have concentrated on current Euro-American societies. This means that I have generally neglected both the rich vein of work (chiefly from anthropology) which has offered up cross-cultural comparisons and the equally rich vein of work which has examined the historical record for evidence of broad shifts in emotional tone and even in what is regarded and named as emotion.[6] Too often, then, in the name of brevity, this paper will presume an affective common-sense background which does not exist. Sensoriums vary by culture and through history (Geurts, 2002). The paper therefore risks ethnocentrism in an area which, more than most, has been aware of difference.

Second, I have concentrated mainly on theoretical explorations of affect, although many of these explorations are backed up by solid empirical work. This means, in particular, that I have tended to pass by the very large amount of material in social psychology and cognitive science. This is unfortunate since this work is now going beyond the crude behaviourism of the past, but incorporating it would have necessitated not just a supplement but a complete new paper (cf. Davidson *et al*, 2003).

Third, my approach is constrained, if that is the right word, by a specific theoretical background which arises from a particular time in the history of social theory, one in which we are starting to grasp elements of what constitutes 'good theory' in ways that have been apprehended before, but often only very faintly. I will pull out just a few of the principles which are intended to produce new conceptual and ethical resources, mainly because they are so germane to what follows.

(1) Distance from biology is no longer seen as a prime marker of social and cultural theory (Turner, 2002). It has become increasingly evident that the biological constitution of being (so-called 'biolayering') has to be taken into account if performative force is ever to be understood, and in particular, the dynamics of birth (and creativity) rather than death (Battersby, 1999).

(2) Relatedly, naturalism and scientism are no longer seen as terrible sins. A key reason for this is that developments like various forms of systems theory, complexity theory and nonlinear dynamics have made science more friendly to social and cultural theory. Another reason is that, increasingly, the history of social and cultural theory and science share common forebears. For example, since the 1940s systems theory has informed both domains in diverse ways and, consequently, we seem to be entering a period in which poststructuralism is likely to be renewed by its forebear, structuralism.

(3) Human language is no longer assumed to offer the only meaningful model of communication.

(4) Events have to be seen as genuinely open on at least some dimensions and, notwithstanding the extraordinary power of many social systems, 'revolt, resistance, breakdown, conspiracy, alternative is everywhere' (Latour, 2002, p. 124). Hence a turn to experiment and the alchemy of the contingent form that such a turn applies (Garfinkel, 2002).

(5) Time and process are increasingly seen as crucial to explanation (Abbott, 2001) because they offer a direct challenge to fixed categories which, in a previous phase of social and cultural theory, still survived, though complicated by the idea that one considered their workings in more detail. The multiplication of forms of knowledge and the traffic between them is taken seriously (Rabinow, 2003).

(6) Space is no longer seen as a nested hierarchy moving from 'global' to 'local'. This absurd scale-dependent notion is replaced by the notion that what counts is connectivity and that the social is 'only a tiny set of narrow, standardised connections' out of many others (Latour, 2002, p. 124).

(7) In other words, what is at stake is a different model of what thinking is, one that extends reflexivity to all manner of actors, that recognises reflexivity as not just a property of cognition and which realises the essentially patchy and material nature of what counts as thought.

What is affect?

The problem that must be faced straight away is that there is no stable definition of affect. It can mean a lot of different things. These are usually associated with words such as emotion and feeling, and a consequent repertoire of terms such as hatred, shame, envy, jealousy, fear, disgust, anger, embarrassment, sorrow, grief, anguish, pride, love, happiness, joy, hope, wonder, though for various reasons that will become clear, I do not think these words work well as simple translations of the term 'affect'. In particular, I want to get away from the idea that some root kind of emotion (like shame) can act as a key political cipher (Nussbaum, 2002).

In the brief and necessarily foreshortened review

which follows, I will set aside approaches that tend to work with a notion of individualised emotions (such as are often found in certain forms of empirical sociology and psychology) and stick with approaches that work with a notion of broad tendencies and lines of force: emotion as motion both literally and figurally (Bruno, 2002). I will consider four of these approaches in turn but it is important not to assume that I am making any strong judgements as to their efficacy: each of these approaches has a certain force which I want to draw on as well as certain drawbacks. However, it is extremely important to note that none of these approaches could be described as based on a notion of human individuals coming together in community. Rather, in line with my earlier work, each cleaves to an 'inhuman' or 'transhuman' framework in which individuals are generally understood as effects of the events to which their body parts (broadly understood) respond and in which they participate. Another point that needs to be made is that each of these approaches has connections (some strong, some weak) to the others.[7] Then one last point needs to be noted; in each approach *affect is understood as a form of thinking*, often indirect and non-reflective, it is true, but thinking all the same. And, similarly, all manner of the spaces which they generate must be thought of in the same way, as means of thinking and as thought in action. Affect is a different kind of intelligence about the world, but it is intelligence none-the-less, and previous attempts which have either relegated affect to the irrational or raised it up to the level of the sublime are both equally wrong-headed.

The first translation of affect which I want to address conceives of affect as a set of embodied practices that produce visible conduct as an outer lining. This translation arises chiefly out of the phenomenological tradition but also includes traces of social interactionism and hermeneutics (cf. Redding, 1999). Its chief concern is to develop descriptions of how emotions occur in everyday life, understood as the richly expressive/aesthetic feeling-cum-behaviour of continual becoming that is provided chiefly by bodily states and processes (and which is understood as constitutive of affect). This has meant getting past two problems that have plagued the sociology of emotions in the past: the problem of decontextualisation and the problem of representation. In the first case, the problem is that, more than normally, context seems to be a vital element in the constitution of affect. Very often, the source of emotions seem to come from somewhere outside the body, from the setting itself, but this setting is cancelled out by such methods as questionnaires and other such instruments. In the second case, the problem is that emotions are largely non-representational: they are 'formal evidence of what, in one's relations with others, speech cannot conceal' (Katz, 1999, p. 323);

> Studies almost always end up analysing how people talk about their emotions. If there is anything distinctive about emotions, it is that, even if they commonly occur in the course of speaking, they are not talk, not even just forms of expression, they are ways of expressing something going on that talk cannot grasp. Historical and cultural studies similarly elide the challenge of understanding emotional experience when they analyse texts, symbols, material objects, and ways of life as representations of emotions.
>
> (Katz, 1999, p. 4)

Because there is no time out from expressive being, perception of a situation and response are intertwined and assume a certain kind of 'response-ability' (Katz, 1999), an artful use of a vast sensorium of bodily resources which depends heavily on the actions of others (indeed it is through such re-actions that we most often see what we are doing).[8] Most of the time, this response-ability is invisible but when it becomes noticeable it stirs up powerful emotions:

> Blushes, laughs, cryings, and anger emerge on faces and through coverings that usually hide visceral substrata. The doing of emotions is a process of breaking bodily boundaries, of tears spilling out, rage burning up, and as laughter bursts out, the emphatic involvement of guts as a designated source of the involvement.
>
> (Katz, 1999, p. 322)

In other (than) words, emotions form a rich moral array through which and with which the world is thought and which can sense different things even though they cannot always be named.

> Between oneself and the world there is a new term, a holistically sensed, new texture in the social moment, and one relates to others in and through that emergent and transforming experience. A kind of metamorphosis occurs in which the self goes into a new container or

> takes on a temporary flesh for the passage to an altered state of social being. The subjects of our analysis in the first place own the poetic devices.
>
> (Katz, 1999, p. 343)

The second translation of affect is the most culturally familiar in that its vocabulary is now a part of how Euro-American subjects routinely describe themselves. It is usually associated with psychoanalytic frames and is based around a notion of drive. Often, it will follow the Freudian understanding that one's physiological drive – sexuality, libido, desire – is the root source of human motivation and identity. Emotions are primarily vehicles or manifestations of the underlying libidinal drive; variations on the theme of 'desire'. A conception such as this, which reduces affect to drive, may be too stark, however. As Sedgwick (2003, p. 18) puts it, such a move 'permits a diagrammatic sharpness of thought that may, however, be too impoverishing in qualitative terms'.

Sedgwick tries to solve this problem by turning to the work of Silvan Tomkins (Demos, 1995; Sedgwick and Frank, 1995). Tomkins distinguishes between the drive and the affect system. The drive system is relatively narrowly constrained and instrumental in being concentrated on particular aims (e.g. breathing, eating, drinking, sleeping, excreting), time-limited (e.g. stopping each of these activities will have more or less deleterious consequences after a period of time) and concentrated on particular objects (e.g. getting a breath of air or a litre of water). In contrast, affects[9] such as anger, enjoyment, excitement or sadness, shame and distress can range across all kinds of aims (one of which may simply be to stimulate their own arousal – what Tomkins calls their autotelic function), can continually redefine the aim under consideration[10], can have far greater freedom with respect to time than drives (an affect such as anger may last for a few seconds but equally may motivate revenge that spans decades) and can focus on many different kinds of object:

> Affects can be, and are, attached to things, people, ideas, sensations, relations, activities, ambitions, institutions, and any other number of other things, including other affects. Thus one can be excited by anger, disgusted by shame, or surprised by joy.
>
> (Sedgwick, 1993, p. 19)

For Tomkins, affect is not subservient to a supposedly primary drive system. In many cases the apparent urgency of the drive system results from its co-assembly with appropriate affects which act as necessary amplifiers. Indeed, affects may be:

> either much more causal than any drive could be or much more monopolistic....Most of the characteristics which Freud attributed to the Unconscious and to the Id are in fact salient aspects of the affect system....Affect enables both insatiability and extreme lability, fickleness and finickiness.
>
> (Tomkins cited in Sedgwick, 2003, p. 21)

Significantly, for Tomkins, it is the face that is the chief site of affect: 'I have now come to regard the skin, in general, and the skin of the face in particular, as of the greatest importance in producing the feel of affect' (Tomkins cited in Demos, 1995, p. 89).[11] But, for Tomkins, it is important to note that the face was not the expression of something else, it *was* affect in process.

The third translation of affect is naturalistic and hinges on adding capacities through interaction in a world which is constantly becoming. It is usually associated first of all with Spinoza and then subsequently with Deleuze's modern ethological reinterpretation of Spinoza.

Spinoza set out to challenge the model put forward by Descartes of the body as animated by the will of an immaterial mind or soul, a position which reflected Descartes' allegiance to the idea that the world consisted of two different substances: extension (the physical field of objects positioned in a geometric space which has become familiar to us as a Cartesian space) and thought (the property which distinguishes conscious beings as 'thinking things' from objects).

In contrast, Spinoza was a monist. He believed that there was only one substance in the universe, 'God or Nature' in all its forms; human beings and all other objects could only be modes of this one unfolding substance. Each mode was spatially extended in its own way and thought in its own way and unfolded in a determinate manner. So, in Spinoza's world, everything is part of a thinking and a doing simultaneously: they are aspects of the same thing expressed in two registers.[12] In turn, this must mean that knowing proceeds in parallel with the body's physical encounters, out of interaction. Spinoza is no irrationalist, however. What he is attempting here is to understand

thoughtfulness in a new way, extending its activity into nature.

Spinoza's metaphysics was accompanied by a particular notion of what we might nowadays call human psychology. For Spinoza, human psychology is manifold, a complex body arising out of interaction which is an alliance of many simple bodies and which therefore exhibits what nowadays would be called emergence – the capacity to demonstrate powers at higher levels of organization which do not exist at other levels; 'an individual may be characterised by a fixed number of definite properties (extensive and qualitative) and yet possess an indefinite number of capacities to affect and be affected by other individuals' (DeLanda, 2002, p. 62). In turn, this manifold psychology is being continually modified by the myriad encounters taking place between individual bodies and other finite things. The exact nature of the kinds of modifications that take place will depend upon the relations that are possible between individuals who are also simultaneously elements of other complex bodies. Spinoza describes the active outcome of these encounters to affect or be affected by using the term emotion or affect (*affectus*) which is both body and thought.

> By EMOTION (affectus) I understand the modifications of the body by which the power of action of the body is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time the idea of these modifications.
>
> (*Ethics*. III,def.3)

So affect, defined as the property of the active outcome of an encounter, takes the form of an increase or decrease in the ability of the body and mind alike to act, which can be positive – and thus increase that ability (counting as 'joyful' or euphoric) – or negative – and thus diminish that ability (counting as 'sorrowful' or dysphoric). Spinoza therefore detaches 'the emotions' from the realm of responses and situations and attaches them instead to action and encounters as the affections of substance or of its attributes and as *greater or lesser forces of existing*. They therefore become firmly a part of 'nature', of the same order as storms or floods.

> The way of understanding the nature of anything, of whatever kind, must always be the same, viz. through the universal rules and laws of nature.... I have therefore regarded passions like love, hate, anger, envy, pride, pity, and other feelings which agitate the mind ... as properties which belong to it in the same way as heat, cold, storm, thunder and the like belong to the nature of the atmosphere.
>
> (*Ethics*, Pref.: C492)

But affect will present differently to body and mind at each encounter. In the attribute of body, affect structures encounters so that bodies are disposed for action in a particular way. In the attribute of mind, affect structures encounters as a series of modifications arising from the relations between ideas which may be more or less adequate and more or less empowering. In other words, the issue is the composition of an affective relationship. So 'euphoria and dysphoria are not the ground of any given emotion any more than musical harmony is the ground of the simultaneous tones which give rise to it. The names of the many emotions we experience are merely the names given to differently assembled euphoric or dysphoric relations, akin to chords' (Brown and Stenner, 2001, p. 95).

This emphasis on relations is important. Though Spinoza makes repeated references to 'individuals' it is clear from his conception of bodies and minds and affects as manifolds that for him the prior category is what he calls the 'alliance' or 'relationship'. So affects, for example, occur in an encounter between manifold beings, and the outcome of each encounter depends upon what forms of composition these beings are able to enter into.

Such a way of proceeding from relations and encounters has many echoes in contemporary social science and forms the touchstone of much recent work in human geography. Most especially, it shows up in work which is concerned to find common complexes of relation, such as that informed by contemporary philosophers and most notably Gilles Deleuze. Deleuze (1988, 2003) added what might be called an ethological spin to Spinoza's assertion that things are never separable from their relations with the world by drawing on the work of writers such as von Uexküll on the perceptual worlds of animals and then applying the same kind of thinking to human beings. Thus Deleuze (1988) considers the simplest of von Uexküll's animals, a tick, whose *raison d'être* is sucking the blood of passing mammals. It appears to be capable of only three affects: light (climb to the top of a branch), smell (fall on to a mammal that passes beneath the branch) and heat (seek the warmest spot on the mammal). Deleuze then applies the same kind of reasoning to human beings. But there he has to make the considerable reservation that we really

have no idea either what affects human bodies or minds might be capable of in a given encounter ahead of time or, indeed, more generally, what worlds human beings might be capable of building, so affects are 'the nonhuman becomings of man' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 169). He is therefore led towards a language/practice of different speeds and intensities which can track all the compositions and combinations that human beings might be able to bring into play.

> If we are Spinozists we will not define a thing by its form, nor by its organs and its functions, nor as a substance or a subject. Borrowing terms from the Middle Ages, or from geography, we will define it by longitude or latitude. A body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea; it can be a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity. We call longitude of a body the set of relations of speed and slowness, of momentum and rest, between particles that compose it from this point of view, that is, between unformed elements. We call latitude the set of affects that occupy a body at each moment, that is, the intensive states of an anonymous force (force for existing, capacity for being affected). In this way we construct the map of the body. The longitudes and latitudes together constitute Nature, the plane of immanence or consistency, which is always variable and is constantly being altered, composed and recomposed by individuals and collectivities.
>
> (Deleuze, 1988, pp127–128)

This Spinozan-Deleuzian notion of affect as always emergent is best set out by Massumi (2002, pp. 35–36, my emphasis) when he writes:

> Affects are virtual synesthetic perspectives anchored in (functionally limited by) the actually existing, particular things that embody them. The autonomy of affect is ... its openness. Affect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is. Formed, qualified, situated perceptions and cognitions fulfilling functions of actual connection or blockage are the capture and closure of affect. Emotion is the most intense (most contracted) expression of that capture – and of the fact that something has always and again escaped. Something remains unactualised, inseparable from but unassimilable to any particular, functionally anchored perspective. That is why all emotion is more or less disorienting, and why it is classically described as being outside of oneself, at the very point at which one is most intimately and unshareably in contact with oneself and one's vitality .... Actually existing, structured things live in and through that which escapes them. Their autonomy is the autonomy of affect.
>
> The escape of affect cannot but be perceived, alongside the perceptions that are its capture. This side-perception may be punctual, localised in an event .... When it is punctual, it is usually described in negative terms, as a form of shock (the sudden interruption of functions of connection). But it is also continuous, like a background perception that accompanies every event, however quotidian. When the continuity of affective escape is put into words, it tends to take on positive connotations. For it is nothing less than the perception of one's own vitality, *one's sense of aliveness, of changeability* (often described as 'freedom'). One's 'sense of aliveness' is a continuous nonconscious self-perception (unconscious self-reflection or self-referentiality). It is the perception of this self-perception, its naming and making conscious, that allows affect to be effectively analysed – as long as a vocabulary can be found for that which is imperceptible but whose escape from perception cannot but be perceived, as long as one is alive.

I want to foreground one last translation of affect which we might call Darwinian. For Darwin, expressions of emotion were universal and are the product of evolution. Neither our expressions nor our emotions are necessarily unique to human beings. Other animals have some of the same emotions, and some of the expressions produced by animals resemble our own. Expressions, which typically involve the face and the voice, and to a lesser extent body posture and movement, have a number of cross-cultural features. In contrast, gestures, which typically involve hand movement, are not universal: generally, they vary from culture to culture in the same way as language.

Though scientific work on emotions flourished, Darwin's work on emotions was all but ignored for a hundred years or so. However, it has recently enjoyed something of a revival, associated in particu-

lar with the work of Ekman (1995, 2003; Ekman and Rosenberg, 1997). As Ekman has shown, Darwin's work was important for three reasons. First, it tried to answer the 'why' question: Why are particular expressions associated with particular emotions? Second, it drew on a wide range of evidence, not only of a peculiar quantity (Darwin drew on a large amount of international correspondents) but also of a peculiar quality: Darwin's use of engravings and photographs of the face, using a number of sources, has become iconic. Third, there was his claim that there is a strong line of emotional descent running from animals to humans, born out of the evolution of affective expression as a means of preparing the organism for action, a claim arising in part out of a desire to answer critics of evolution.

What Darwin omitted from his study was any communicative aspect of emotion and it is this aspect which has been added in today. Flying in the face of total cultural relativism, neo-Darwinians argue that there are at least five emotions which are common to all cultures: anger, fear, sadness, disgust and enjoyment,[13] and that each of these emotions is manifested in common facial expressions. These common facial expressions are involuntary signs of internal physiological changes and not just a part of the back-and-forth of the communicative repertoire. But this is not to say that emotions operate like instincts, uninfluenced by cultural experience. Communication has its say. 'Social experience influences attitudes about emotions, creates display and feeling rules, develops and tunes the particular occasions which will most rapidly call forth an emotion' (Ekman, 1998, p. 387).[14] In particular, different cultures may not have the same words for emotions or may explain a particular emotion in a radically different way.[15] Further, the specific events that trigger particular emotions can, of course, be quite different between cultures; for example, disgust is triggered by quite different kinds of food according to cultural norms of what is nice and nasty.

Four different notions of affect, then, each of which depends on a sense of push in the world but the sense of push is subtly different in each case. In the case of embodied knowledge, that push is provided by the expressive armoury of the human body. In the case of affect theory it is provided by biologically differentiated positive and negative affects rather than the drives of Freudian theory. In the world of Spinoza and Deleuze, affect is the capacity of interaction that is akin to a natural force of emergence. In the neo-Darwinian universe, affect is a deep-seated physiological change written involuntarily on the face. How might we think about the politics of affect, given that these different notions would seem to imply different cues and even ontologies? To begin with, we need to think about general changes in the affective tone of Euro-American cultures that are busily redefining the political landscape. That is the function of the next section.

The politics of affect

Of course, affect has always been a key element of politics and the subject of numerous powerful political technologies which have knotted thinking, technique and affect together in various potent combinations. One example is the marshalling of aggression through various forms of military trainings such as drill. From the seventeenth century onward these kinds of training have become more and more sophisticated, running in lockstep with 'advances' in military technology. These trainings were used to condition soldiers and other combatants to kill, even though it seems highly unlikely that this would be the normal behaviour of most people on the battlefield. These trainings involved bodily conditionings which allowed fear to be controlled. They allowed anger and other aggressive emotions to be channelled into particular situations. They damped down revenge killings during bursts of rage, and they resulted in particular effects (e.g. increased firing rates and higher kill ratios) which the military had not been achieving heretofore (see Keegan, 1976; Grossman, 1996; Bourke, 2000).

This may appear to many to be an extreme example. But I think it is illustrative of a tendency towards the greater and greater engineering of affect, notwithstanding the many covert emotional histories that are only now beginning to be recovered (cf. Berlant, 2000). Similar processes have been happening in many other arenas of social life, whether on a domestic or larger scale, sufficient to suggest that the envelope of what we call the political must increasingly expand to take note of 'the way that political attitudes and statements are partly conditioned by intense autonomic bodily reactions that do not simply reproduce the trace of a political intention and cannot be wholly recuperated within an ideological regime of truth' (Spinks, 2001, p. 23). In this section I want to illustrate how this envelope is expanding in cities by reference to four developments. The first of these developments consists of the general changes in the *form* of such politics which are taking place in the current era, changes which make affect an increasingly visible element of the political. In partic-

ular, I want to point towards so-called 'agencies of choice' and 'mixed-action repertoires' in line with a general move to make more and more areas of life the subject of a new set of responsibilities called 'choice'. As Norris (2002, p. 222) puts it:

> The expansion of the franchise during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries generated the rise of traditional channels for political mobilisation and expression in representative government, particularly the growth of extra-parliamentary party organizations, the spread of cheap mass-circulation newspapers, and the establishment of traditional groups in civic society, exemplified by the organized labour movement, civic associations, voluntary groups, and religious organizations. By the 1940s and 1950s, these channels had settled and consolidated and were taken for granted as the major institutions linking citizens and the state within established democracies. Rising levels of human capital and societal modernization mean that, today, a more educated citizenry ... has moved increasingly from agencies of loyalty to agencies of choice, and from electoral repertoires toward mixed-action repertoires combining electoral activities and protest politics. In postindustrial societies, the younger generations, in particular, have become less willing than their parents and grandparents to channel their political energies through traditional agencies exemplified by parties and churches, and more likely to express themselves through a variety of ad hoc, contextual, and specific activities of choice, increasingly via new social movements, internet activism, and transnational policy networks. Conventional indicators may blind us to the fact that critical citizens may be becoming less loyalist and deferential in orientation toward mass branch parties ... at the same time that they are becoming more actively engaged via alternative means of expression.

Many of these new forms of choice politics rely on an expansion of what has been conventionally regarded as the urban political sphere. For example, the political nowadays routinely takes in all manner of forms of culture–nature relation (e.g. environmental politics, animal rights politics, pro-choice or anti-life politics). In turn, this redefinition of what counts as political has allowed more room for explicitly affective appeals which are heavily dependent upon the media, as well as similar appeals which endeavour to reduce these affective impacts (e.g. by referring to science, by various means of deconstruction of the 'reality' of an image and so on) (Boltanski, 2002).

This brings me to the second development which is the heavy and continuing *mediatization* of politics. We live in societies which are enveloped in and saturated by the media: most importantly, it is difficult to escape the influence of the *screen* which now stares at us from so many mundane locations – from almost every room in the house to doctors' waiting rooms, from airport lounges to shops and shopping malls, from bars to many workplaces (Knorr Cetina, 2001; McCarthy, 2001), from the insides of elevators to whole buildings – that it is possible to argue that the screen has taken on a number of the roles formerly ascribed to parent, lover, teacher and blank stooge, as well as adding a whole series of 'postsocial'[16] relations which seem to lie somewhere between early film theory's brute translation of screen-ic force (Kracauer, 1960; Balasz, 1970) and cognitive film theory's later, more nuanced interpretation in which cognitive processes are strained through various conventions and styles (see Bordwell and Carroll, 1996; Thrift, 2004b). This mediatization has had important effects. As McKenzie (2001) has pointed out, its most important effect has been to enshrine the performative principle at the heart of modern Euro-American societies and their political forms. This has occurred in a number of ways. To begin with, the technical form of modern media tends to foreground emotion, both in its concentration on key affective sites such as the face or voice and its magnification of the small details of the body that so often signify emotion.[17] Political presentation nowadays often fixes on such small differences and makes them stand for a whole. One line of movement can become a progression of meaning, able to be actualised and implanted locally. Massumi (2002, p. 41, my emphasis) observes this quality in Ronald Reagan:

> That is why Reagan could be so many things to so many people; that is why the majority of the electorate could disagree with him on major issues but still vote for him. Because he was actualised, in their neighbourhood, as a movement and meaning of their selection – or at least selected for them with their acquiescence. He was a man for all inhibitions. It was commonly said that he ruled primarily by projecting an air of *confidence*. That was the emo-

> tional tenor of his political manner, dysfunction notwithstanding. Confidence is the emotional translation of affect as capturable life potential; it is a particular emotional expression and becoming – conscious of one's sideperceived vitality. Reagan transmitted vitality, virtuality, tendency, in sickness and interruption.

Thus, political presentation conforms increasingly to media norms of presentation which emphasize the performance of emotion as being an index of credibility. Increasingly, political legitimation arises from this kind of performance (Thompson, 2001). And, as a final point, these kinds of presentation chime with the increasingly 'therapeutic' form of selfhood which is becoming common in Euro-American societies (cf. Giddens, 1991; Rose, 1996). Indeed, Nolan (1998) argues that this therapeutic or 'emotivist' ethos is embedding itself in the structures of the American state to such a degree that it is becoming a key technology of governance, both challenging and to some extent replacing the affective background of older bureaucratic 'machine' technologies, by, for example, recognising emotional labour, emotion management and emotional learning as key skills (Smith, 2002):

> Life in the machine has made appeals to the older [traditional] systems of meaning impossible. Instead the individual is encouraged to escape from within and to refer to the language of emotions. The emotivist motif, then, is the 'dictum that truth is grasped through sentiment or feeling, rather than through rational judgement or abstract reasoning'. It encourages a particular ontology that replaces the Cartesian maxim 'I think, therefore I am' with the emotive 'I feel, therefore I am'. This emotivist understanding of the self shapes the way in which individuals participate and communicate in societal life. In the contemporary context, as Jean Bethke Elshtain observes, 'all points seem to revolve around the individual's subjective feelings – whether of frustration, anxiety, stress, fulfilment. The citizen recedes; the therapeutic self prevails'.
>
> (Nolan, 1998, p. 6)

Thus, a series of heterogeneous knowledges of performance move to centre stage in modern societies which constitute a new 'disaggregated' mode of discipline, an emergent stratum of power and knowledge. These knowledges construct power in a number of ways – by delivering messages with passion, for example (indeed, it is often the force with which passion is delivered which is more important than the message), by providing a new minute landscape of manipulation (Doane, 2002), by adding new possibilities for making signs, and generally by adding new openings out of the event. But, most importantly, they provide a new means of creating 'fractal' subjects challenged to perform across a series of different situations in a way which demands not so much openness as controlled flexibility.[18] As McKenzie (2001, p. 19) puts it:

> The desire produced by performative power and knowledge is not moulded by distinct disciplinary mechanisms. It is not a repressive desire: it is instead 'excessive', intermittently modulated and pushed across the thresholds of various limits by overlapping and sometimes competing systems. Further, diversity is not simply integrated, for integration is itself becoming diversified. Similarly, deviation is not simply normalised, for norms operate and transform themselves through their own transgression and deviation. We can understand this development better when we realise that the mechanisms of performative power are nomadic and flexible more than sedentary and rigid, that its spaces are networked and digital more than enclosed and physical, that its temporalities are polyrhythmic and non-linear and not simply sequential and linear. On the performative stratum, one shuttles quickly between different evaluative grids, switching back and forth between divergent challenges to perform – or else.

A third development is closely linked to mediatization and the rise of performance knowledges. It is the growth of new forms of calculation in sensory registers that would not have previously been deemed 'political'. In particular, through the advent of a whole series of technologies, small spaces and times, upon which affect thrives and out of which it is often constituted, have become visible and are able to be enlarged so that they can be knowingly operated upon. Though it would be possible to argue that outposts were already being constructed in this continent of phenomenality back in the seventeenth century with, for example, the growth of interest in conditioning the military body through such practices as drill, I would argue that

the main phase of colonisation dates from the mid-nineteenth century and rests on four developments (Thrift, 2000). First, there is the ability to sense the small spaces of the body through a whole array of new scientific instruments which have, in turn, made it possible to think of the body as a set of micro-geographies. Second, there is the related ability to sense small bodily movements. Beginning with the photographic work of Marey, Muybridge and others and moving into our current age in which the camera can impose its own politics of time and space, we can now think of time as minutely segmented frames, able to be speeded up, slowed down, even frozen for a while. Third, numerous body practices have come into existence which rely on and manage such knowledge of small times and spaces, most especially those connected with the performing arts, including the 'underperforming' of film acting, much modern dance, the insistent cross-hatched tempo of much modern music, and so on. Special performance notations, like Labanotation and other 'choreo-graphics', allow this minute movement to be recorded, analysed and recomposed. Then, finally, a series of discourses concerning the slightest gesture and utterance of the body have been developed, from the elaborate turn-taking of conversational analysis to the intimate spaces of proxemics, from the analysis of gesture to the mapping of 'body language'.

Thus, what was formerly invisible or imperceptible becomes constituted as visible and perceptible through a new structure of attention which is increasingly likely to pay more than lip-service to those actions which go on in small spaces and times, actions which involve qualities like anticipation, improvisation and intuition, all those things which by drawing on the second-to-second resourcefulness of the body, make for artful conduct. Thus perception can no longer 'be thought of in terms of immediacy, presence, punctuality' (Crary, 1999, p. 4) as it is both stretched and intensified, widened and condensed.

In turn, this new structure of attention, ironically enough through the application of greater speed, has allowed us to gain a much greater understanding of what is often nowadays called 'bare life' (Thrift, 2000). An undiscovered country has gradually hoved into view, the country of the 'half-second delay'. This is the period of bodily *anticipation* originally discovered by Wilhelm Wundt in the mid-nineteenth century. Wundt was able to show that consciousness takes time to construct; we are 'late for consciousness' (Damasio, 1999, p. 127). That insight was subsequently formalised in the 1960s by Libet using new body recording technologies. He was able to show decisively that an action is set in motion before we decide to perform it: the 'average readiness potential' is about 0.8 seconds, although cases as long as 1.5 seconds have been recorded. In other words, 'consciousness takes a relatively long time to build, and any experience of it being instantaneous must be a backdated illusion' (McCrone, 1999, p. 131). Or, as Gray (2002, p. 66) puts it more skeletally; 'the brain makes us ready for action, then we have the experience of acting.'[19]

To summarize, what we are able to see is that the space of embodiment is expanded by a fleeting but crucial moment, a constantly moving preconscious frontier. This fleeting space of time is highly political. The by now familiar work of Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Merleau-Ponty, Bourdieu and Varela shows the ways in which the structure of expectation of the world (the background) is set up by body practices which have complex and often explicitly political genealogies: the smallest gesture or facial expression can have the largest political compass (Ekman, 1995, 2003). More recent work has added to this understanding by emphasising the degree to which these body practices rely on the emotions as a crucial element of the body's apprehension of the world; emotions are a vital part of the body's anticipation of the moment. Thus we can now understand emotions as a kind of corporeal thinking (Le Doux, 1997, Damasio, 1999, 2003): 'through our emotion, we reach back sensually to grasp the tacit, embodied foundations of ourselves' (Katz, 1999 p. 7).[20]

The result is that we now have a small space of time which is increasingly able to be sensed, the space of time which shapes the moment. Of course, once such a space is opened up it can also be operated on. As Foucault and Agamben make clear, biopolitics is now at the centre of Western modes of power. But what is being ushered in now is a *micro-biopolitics,* a new domain carved out of the half-second delay which has become visible and so available to be worked upon through a whole series of new entities and institutions. This domain was already implicitly political, most especially through the mechanics of the various body positions which are a part of its multiple abilities to anticipate. Now it has become explicitly political through practices and techniques which are aimed at it specifically.

A fourth development which involves affect is the careful design of urban space to produce political response. Increasingly, urban spaces and times

are being designed to invoke affective response according to practical and theoretical knowledges that have been derived from and coded by a host of sources. It could be claimed that this has always been the case – from monuments to triumphal processions, from theatrical arenas to mass body displays – and I would agree. In the twentieth century, it could be argued that much of the activity of the design of space was powered up again, becoming entangled with the evolution of knowledges of shaping the body (such as the microbiopolitics referred to above), often in a politics of the most frightening sort.[21] But what I would argue is different now is both the sheer weight of the gathering together of formal knowledges of affective response (whether from highly formal theoretical backgrounds such as psychoanalysis or practical theoretical backgrounds like performance), the vast number of practical knowledges of affective response that have become available in a semi-formal guise (e.g. design, lighting, event management, logistics, music, performance), and the enormous diversity of available cues that are able to be worked with in the shape of the profusion of images and other signs, the wide spectrum of available technologies, and the more general archive of events. The result is that affective response can be designed into spaces, often out of what seems like very little at all. Though affective response can clearly never be guaranteed, the fact is that this is no longer a random process either. It is a form of landscape engineering that is gradually pulling itself into existence, producing new forms of power as it goes.

Changing the political

What might these four developments and others like them mean for the practice of the political (and by implication the definition of the political itself)? In what I hope is a recognisable echo of the papers by Ash Amin and Doreen Massey in this issue, I would want to point to a number of shifts, each of which focuses on new intensities and speeds that have heretofore not so much been neglected as been kept firmly in the realm of either the utterly practical or heavily theoretical realms. But now all kinds of corporate and state institutions are trying to formulate bodies of knowledge of these realms which are both systematic and portable (Thrift, 2003), knowledges of complex affective states of becoming, 'regimes of feeling' which are bound to be constitutive of new political practices. It therefore becomes incumbent on those forces which regard these developments as rather worrying – and indeed as likely to lead to a new kind of velvet dictatorship – to produce their own analyses and political agendas. As part of the general move towards thinking democracy as a *process* of 'community without unity' (Castronovo and Nelson, 2003), I want to try to address this task.

But how to frame such an agenda? In a general sense, one might argue that the goal is a kind of 'emotional liberty'. But this goal must be tempered by the familiar realisation, going back to Plato and before, that the untrammelled expression of emotions is not necessarily a good thing at all. In other words, what is being aimed for is a navigation of feeling which goes beyond the simple romanticism of somehow maximising individual emotions. That navigation must involve at least three moments. First of all, it needs to be placed within a set of disciplinary exercises if it is to be an effective force, taking in the various forms of agonistic and ethical reflexivity that Foucault grouped under 'care of the self', forms of reflexivity that were intended to produce 'an athlete of the event' (cited in Rabinow, 2003, p. 9). It will therefore *de facto* involve various forms of channelling and 'repression'. Second, it requires a more general expressive exploration of existential territories of the kind that Guattari (1995) gives at least a flavour of when he writes that:

> there is an ethical choice in favour of the richness of the possible, an ethics and politics of the virtual that decorporealizes and deterritorializes contingency, linear causality and the pressure of circumstances and significations which besiege us. It is a choice for processuality, irreversibility and resingularization. On a small scale, this redeployment can turn itself into the mode of entrapment, of impoverishment, indeed of catastrophe in neurosis. It can take up reactive religious references. It can annihilate itself in alcohol, drugs, television, an endless daily grind. But it can also make use of other procedures that are more collective, more social, more political.

Third, it will attempt to engage a productive, forward sense of life (Thrift, 2001/2004, 2004a,b) which strives to engage positively with the world rather than make private bargains with misery, a politics of hope which must necessarily be, in part, an affective exercise of what Bloch (1986, Vol. 1, p. 143) calls 'productive premonition': 'It is openly

conscious of itself, precisely as a Not-Yet-Conscious, demonstrates in its alertness the desire to learn, shows the capacity to be circumspect in its foreseeing, to have circumspection, even foresight in its fore-sight'. This is a kind of practical utopianism, if you like, an anticipatory intelligence engrained in going forward, a sense of tendency: 'its support and correlate is process, which has not yet surrendered its most immanent What-content, but which is still under way' (Bloch, 1986, Vol. 1, p. 146).

And why the necessity of sticking to this agenda? In order to begin to forge a politics of affect. For it is quite clear that there are enormous emotional costs and benefits for individuals or groups in being shaped by particular institutions in particular ways. However, it is often quite difficult to show what is at stake for the individual or groups in submitting to such institutions and embracing certain affective styles that render them deferential, obedient or humble – or independent, aggressive and arrogant. Yet, equally, we can all attest to the fact that there are many 'hidden injuries' in the systems that we inhabit and, equally, all manner of proto-political longings to change our situation that we cannot necessarily articulate but which drive us along: 'as you said all along, you had no idea what you were doing. You were feeling your way toward something maybe, but you don't know what' (Kipnis, 2000, p. 44). For example, Kipnis (2000, pp. 42–43) cites the example of the emotional enterprise of adultery as a behaviour which very often involves a kind of affective utopianism in among all the mess:

> No, of course, we don't want to elevate individual experiences like these into imaginary forms of protorevolutionary praxis, or to hold up private utopias as models for social transformations. Adultery doesn't necessarily present you with models of utopian worlds; instead the utopianism is contained in the feelings it embodies – an experience, not a blueprint.

Disciplines like psychoanalysis have been very good at searching out the violence done and the costs that have to be borne and laying them bare through such indices as physical trauma and tears. But, at the same time, we still lack a politics of emotional liberty[22] or hope which can be both productive and not so attached to Euro-American individualism that it simply reproduces the assumptions of the West in what it strives for: a kind of free to do what one likes goal-oriented selfishness which actually flies in the face of all the evidence that human individuals (or perhaps better 'dividuals') only exist as faint traces in much larger and more extensive circuits of social relation (Porter, 2003). As Reddy (2001, p. 114) puts it:

> Can a person who feels that an emotion is a learned response, a product of social construction, be oppressed – in the political sense of the term – by this feeling? The concept of emotions as used in the West is closely associated with the individual's most deeply espoused goals; to feel love for one's spouse or fear of one's opponent, presumably, is to be moved by those things one most authentically wants. It is hard to see how a person can be oppressed by his or her most authentic, most deeply held goals. To make such a claim, that a certain person, group, or community is politically oppressed – without knowing it – would require that one be prepared to assert something about the nature of the individual. Such an assertion, by definition, would have to apply to the individual as universally constituted, outside the parameters of any given 'culture'. Who would have the temerity, today, to make positive claims about this politically charged issue?

In what follows, I therefore want to point to four 'venturings beyond' (Bloch, 1986), attempts to form new political intensities and the attendant explorations of discipline, expressive potential and hope which are grouping around them, each of which corresponds to one of the forms of affect introduced in the first part of this paper. In each case, there are some complexities. Foremost among these is the fact that these knowledges are not innocent. Each represents a striving for new forms of power-knowledge of the kind that John Allen points to in his paper as well as a new kind of political ethic. So, for example, each of the kinds of thinking about affect that I want to foreground have already been drawn on by large capitalist firms, both to understand their environment and to design new products. But they also provide, along with some recent experiments in cosmopolitics, one of the best hopes for changing our engagement with the political by simply acknowledging *that there is more there there*.

I will begin by considering the kind of affect as-

sociated with embodied practices. The political goal of this strand of work might best be described as *skilful comportment* which allows us to be open to receiving new affectively charged disclosive spaces. This privileging of receptive practices is in contrast to much that currently goes on in Euro-American culture which 'while still structured by receptivity to changing styles of practice, seems to be replacing the substantive good of openness with that of controlled flexibility' (Spinosa, *et al.* 1997, p. 180). Thus the political project in all cases is to make receptivity into the 'top ontological good' (Spinosa *et al.* 1997); but, of course, no clear principle of receptivity can be adduced. Rather, what is being stated is something like a political ethic of the kind laid out by such writers as Varela. Here, I want to point to Varela's emphasis on the potential for understanding new forms of affect born out of the task of producing new practices which are not reliant on an implicit or explicit promise to satisfy some request. For Varela, it is possible *to learn to be open* through a combination of institutional transformation and body trainings which use the half-second delay to act into a situation with good judgement.[23] Such a politics might be one of attempting to redefine education so that it emphasises good judgement (cf. Claxton, 2000) or, at a more mundane level, designing new 'affective' computer interfaces which can wrap themselves around their subjects' concerns in ways which do not, however, act only as a confirmation of the world but also provide challenges.

The second kind of affect is associated with psychoanalytic models of affect of the kind produced by Tomkins and is an attempt to move outside 'the relentlessly self-propagating, adaptive structure of the repressive hypothesis' (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 12). In one sense, this is clearly an attempt to continue the Foucauldian project. In another sense it is an attempt to move beyond it by valorising what Sedgwick (2003) calls the 'middle ranges of agency'.

> [Foucault's] analysis of the pseudodichotomy between repression and liberation has led, in many cases, to its conceptual reimposition in the even more abstractly reified form of the hegemonic and subversive. The seeming ethical urgency of such terms masks their gradual evacuation of substance, as a kind of Gramscian–Foucauldian contagion turns 'hegemonic' into another name for the status quo (ie everything that is) and defines 'subversive' in, increasingly, a purely negative relation to that (an extreme of the same 'negative relation' that had, in Foucault's argument, defined the repressive hypothesis in the first place).... Another problem with reifying the status quo is what it does to the middle ranges of agency. One's relation to what is risked becoming reactive and bifurcated, that of a consumer: one's choices narrow to accepting or refusing (buying, not buying) this or that manifestation of it, dramatizing only the extremes of compulsion or voluntarity. Yet it is only the middle ranges of agency that offer space for effectual creativity or change.
>
> (Sedgwick, 2003, pp. 12–13)

In particular, it is here that it is possible to work on negative affects (e.g. paranoia) by taking up reparative positions that undertake a different range of affects, ambitions and risks and thereby allow the release of positive energies which can then be further worked upon. Seek pleasure rather than just forestall pain. Again, what we find here is an ethical principle.

Such projects of *reparative knowing* are, of course, becoming commonplace as means of producing affective orientations to knowledge which add another dimension to what knowing is. I am thinking here of many studies in the spheres of postcolonial struggles or struggles over sexual or ethnic identity in which a coalition of activists has been gradually able to change the grain and content of perceptual systems by working on associating affective response in both thought and extension.

The third kind of affect is that in the tradition offered by Spinoza and Deleuze. I want to point to two possibilities of a politics. One is a very general one. That is a model of *tending*. Here the simple political imperative is to widen the potential number of interactions a living thing can enter into, to widen the margin of 'play', and, like all living things, but to a greater degree, increasing the number of transformations of the effects of one sensory mode into another. Massumi frames this kind of 'intercessor' approach in relation to the future mission of cultural studies.

> If radical cultural studies semi-artistically refuses to set itself up as a model of any kind, yet lacks powers of contagion, how can it be effective? What mode of validity can it achieve for itself? Consider that the expanded empirical field is full of mutually modulating, battling, negotiating process lines liberally en-

> couraged to develop and sharply express self-interest across their collectively remaindered, ongoing transformations. The anomaly of an affectively engaged yet largely disinterested process line could be a powerful presence if it were capable of conveying its (masochistic?) removal of self-interest. The reciprocal re-adjustments always under way in the empirical field make the pursuit of politics an ecological undertaking, whether it thinks of itself that way or not..... This is a political ecology. The 'object' of political ecology is the coming-together or belonging-together of processually unique and divergent forms of life. Its object is 'symbiosis' along the full length of the nature–culture continuum. The self-disinterest of cultural studies places it in a privileged position to side with symbiosis as such. What cultural studies could become, if it finds a way of expressing its own processual potential, is a political ecology affectively engaging in symbiosis-tending.

This approach will appear a little high and mighty to some. So let us turn in a slightly different direction to end this catalogue of new political directions.

Here I want to concentrate on the idea of a politics aimed at some of the registers of thought that have been heretofore neglected by critical thinkers, even though, as already pointed out above, those in power have turned to these registers as a fertile new field of persuasion and manipulation. The motto of this politics might be Nietzsche's (1968, p. 263) phrase 'Between two thoughts all kinds of affects play their game; but their motions are too fast, therefore we fail to recognise them'. But today 'the dense series of counterloops among cinema, TV, philosophy, neurophysiology and everyday life' mean that we do recognise the realm between thinking and affects and are beginning to outline a '*neuropolitics*' (Connolly, 2002) that might work with them. It is a politics which recognises that political concepts and beliefs can never be reduced to 'disembodied tokens of argumentation. Culture has multiple layers, with each layer marked by distinctive speeds, capacities and levels of linguistic complexity' (Connolly, 2002, p. 45). Take difference and identity as one example of this geology of thinking. The political literature in this area has tended to foreground signification at the expense of affect and has therefore enacted culture as a flat world of concepts and beliefs which can be changed simply by engraining other new concepts and beliefs. It might be possible to point to (and domesticate) the vagaries of thinking in everyday life via a concept like habitus but that is about it. But difference and identity isn't like that. It operates on several registers, each with their own organisations and complexities. So,

> on one register it is a defined minority that deviates from the majority practice. On a second, it is a minority that varies from other constituencies in a setting where there is no definitive majority. On a third, it is that in an identity (subjective or intersubjective) that is obscured, suppressed, or remaindered by its own dominant tendencies – as in the way devout Christians may be inhabited by fugitive forgetfulness and doubts not brought up for review in daily conversations or in church, or in the way that militant atheists may tacitly project life forward after death when not concentrating on the belief that consciousness stops with the death of the body. The third register of difference fades into a fourth, in which surpluses, traces, noises, and charges in and around the beliefs of embodied agents express proto-thoughts and judgements too crude to be conceptualised in a refined way but still intensive and effective enough to make a difference to the selective way judgements are formed, porous arguments are received, and alternatives are weighted. And in a layered, textured culture, cultural argument is always porous. Some of the elements in such a fugitive fund might be indicated, but not of course represented, by those noises, stutters, gestures, looks, accents, exclamations, gurgles, bursts of laughter, gestures and rhythmic or irrhythmic movements that inhabit, punctuate, inflect and help to move the world of concepts and beliefs.
>
> (Connolly, 2002, pp. 43–44)

So we require a microbiopolitics of the subliminal, much of which operates in the half-second delay between action and cognition, a microbiopolitics which understands the kind of biological-cum-cultural gymnastics that takes place in this realm which is increasingly susceptible to new and sometimes threatening knowledges and technologies that operate upon it in ways that produce effective outcomes, even when the exact reasons may be opaque, a micropolitics which understands the in-

sufficiency of argument to political life without, however, denying its pertinence. That micropolitics may be thought to be composed of three main and closely related components. One is quasi-Foucauldian and consists of attention to the arts of the self of the kind already signalled. The second is an 'ethic of cultivation', an ethico-political perspective which attempts to instil generosity towards the world by using some of the infrasensible knowledges that we have already encountered on a whole series of registers (Connolly, 2002). The third involves paying much greater attention to how new forms of space and time are being constituted. In an era in which several new forms of time and space have been born (e.g. cinematic time and the movement image, standardised space and the ability to track and trace) this latter component seems particularly pressing.

The fourth kind of affect is that associated with a neo-Darwinian approach. That approach tends to focus on the face and faciality as an index of emotion and it is this aspect that I want to take up in the next section by concentrating on a particular case study. After all, for most of us, 'the living face is the most important and mysterious surface we deal with. It is the center of our flesh. We eat, drink, breathe and talk with it, and it houses four of the five classic senses' (McNeill, 1998, p. 4). So let's face it, most especially through the medium of the screen which has now become such a dominant means of connecting western cultures.

I do not know what it is i am like[24]

The discussion so far will be trying for some because of its lack of concreteness. So, in this final section I want to bring some of the elements of my argument together in a concrete example which takes elements from the four approaches to affect that I have identified (and especially the neo-Darwinian obsession with the face) and extends them into politics conceived as an art of showing up showing up differently. I want to set out at least some elements of the last kind of politics I want to further by venturing into the realm of video art (taking in any screened art) (Rush, 1999; Ascott, 2003). I have chosen this field for four reasons. First, the film and video screen have become a powerful means of conveying affect in our culture, drawing on a set of historically formed stock repertoires for manipulating space and time which have existed now for nearly a century (Doane, 2002). Second, because video art has slowly come of age as the available technologies have become more adaptable to expression[25] and has gradually been able to forge a common vocabulary of spacing and timing differently which can travel across a number of screened media and which is now also becoming interactive (film, video, web, virtual reality). The blurred and crudely lit video art of the past, often not much more than a means of recording performance art, has been replaced by degrees of colour, texture and motion that make genuine and concerted demands on attention (Campbell, 2003). Third, because new developments such as the web give video artists large and culturally primed audiences which were not available when works had to be sited in the aspic of galleries and which spread out beyond self-defined cultural elites. Fourth, because this work has engaged explicitly with affect. A good example is Roy Ascott's notion of telematic love, built on Charles Fourier's theory of 'passionate attraction' (see Amin and Thrift, 2002), which was described by him as 'the drive given us by nature prior to any reflection ... toward the co-ordination of the passions ... and consequently toward universal unity' (Fourier, cited in Shanken, 2003, p. 75). On this base, Ascott builds a kind of telematic cosmopolitics, in which telematics forms the beginnings of a global networked consciousness[26] based on continuous exchange which is both cognitive and affective. Ascott has built a set of artworks on this premise which act as a machine for imagining life as it could be.

However, it is not only for these reasons that I want to turn to video art. It is also because it can show something about the energetics of movement and emotion and how that relationship is formed and made malleable in cities in which, as I pointed out above, screens, patches of moving light populated chiefly by faces, have increasingly become a ubiquitous and normal means of expression, populating more and more urban spaces and producing a postsocial world in which *faces loom larger than life* (Balazs, 1970).[27] To help me in this endeavour, I want to call on the work of Bill Viola (1995, 2002). Why Viola?[28] I want to point to three reasons. First, and very importantly for me, because he gets real audience response: his works have grip. The mix of unnatural naturalism and magical realism he projects in his works stirs spectators and sometimes stirs them mightily. His exhibitions are not only popular but they also regularly produce extreme emotional responses in their audiences which sometimes seem to cross over into the therapeutic (cf. Gibbons, 2003).

Second, because he is intent on engaging affect but through a series of depictions which knowingly engage the unconscious history of affect, pulling on heart-strings developed over many centuries. In other words, in what is often only a few seconds, Viola is producing an archaeology of the contemporary past which is both transcendent and therapeutic and perhaps, in certain senses, redemptive (Buchli and Lucas, 2001). At a minimum, this archaeology recalls the following histories and cartographies of the contemporary past;

- the history of the representation of the agonies of Christ and other Christian imagery from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. This is a tradition of depiction which harks back to the ancient Greek term *pathos* (which simply signified 'anything that befalls one') and the way that this term became mixed up with the Christian notion of passion which named the suffering and crucifixion of Jesus and was heavily loaded with emotion (Meyer, 2003).
- the history of exact scientific representation of the expressive face from the early days of physiognomy (as in Le Brun's seventeenth-century depiction of faces transported by extreme emotion) through the writings of nineteenth-century anatomists and physicians on facial musculature and expression to Rejlander's carefully staged photographic contributions to Darwin's work and on to the current interest in the face to be found in the so-called affective sciences.
- the hop, step and jump delay of scientific experiment on human perception, as found in, for example, nineteenth-century German psychophysics. This genealogy may be best tracked through the history of the invention and operationalization of the feedback loops of cybernetics and so on into the elementary forms of capitalist life to be found in the minimal presences of the brand and other such sigils.
- the sensate assault on vision which begins with the technological reproduction of reality in the linked images of silent film flitting by and which allows a certain type of intense faciality of the kind found especially in the close-up observations of silent film (Moore, 2000), the 'raw vision' so beloved of Benjamin and Epstein which presses too close and hits us between the eyes in its jerky nearness (Crary, 1999); 'film moves, and fundamentally "moves" us, with its ability to render affects and, in turn, to affect' (Bruno, 2002, p. 7). Again, there are direct links to physiognomy in the use by directors of actresses and actors whose facial deftness allows them to display a map of emotions, and involves the spectator in an intricate process of watching and searching for clues (Taussig, 1999; Bruno, 2002).
- the clichés of modern press reporting and photography which provide a kind of habitual visual taxonomy through which we face/feel the world which is thing-like in its material presence.
- the oligoptic gaze of the dry schemata of modern facial recognition systems that are increasingly being used in a plethora of systems of surveillance and whose genealogy again reaches back to physiognomy (Elkins, 1999).
- the recent struggles of performance and various kinds of performance art to capture the kernel of the videoed face, building on the legacy of movements like behaviorist art, various cybernetic models, kinetic art and interactivity generally (Ascott, 2003).

Viola enacts this multiple historical/cartographic legacy by, for example, using close-up and slow motion[29] on state-of-the art LCD flat screens which recall the multiple screens of medieval polyptychs. The depictions stretch out time in such a way that they allow nuances of feeling to be observed that would barely be noticed in the to and fro of everyday life. They are carefully staged and scripted, sometimes involving a huge cast of actors, as well as stunt people, hundreds of extras, and a panoply of scene designers, plus set builders, a director of photography, wardrobe, makeup, lights, and so on, all for takes which may be less than one minute in length, given the limited capacity of a film magazine at high speed (Wolff, 2002). The intent is clearly to let facial expression or other body movements (and, most obviously, the hand), patterns of light and different spatial formations interact in telling ways, providing 'turbulent surfaces' in which emotional and physical shape coincide in arcs of intensity. At the same time, the depictions point knowingly to their own operations, pulling in paratextual elements (e.g. like frames and times) as integral parts of the performance.

Third, Viola's works point to aspects of cities which are too often neglected. In particular, he has been concerned to highlight the face as a primary composer of affect and maker of presence (Taussig, 1999). Viola sees the face as a colour wheel of emotions and constantly places emotions together as se-

quences which illustrate this shifting spectrum of affect. But it is not just the face, it has to be said. Viola also considers the hand as an index of affect (Tallis, 2003). He also uses the whole body to index more general affective practices of coping, of which the most notable is probably crying (cf. Thrift, 2004). So, the city as a sea of faces, a forest of hands, an ocean of lamentation: these are the building blocks of modern urbanism just as much as brick and stone. In other words, Viola provides an affective history of the city, understood as a chronicle of faces and hands and tears. This is an intimate geography through which and as which affect makes its way, a set of histories of the way in which affect takes hold told by foregrounding a set of affective practices which are too often neglected: seeing visions, praying, crying, each of which has its own cultural history. But Viola is also quite aware that these ecstatic practices are usually part of a daily round which can itself become his focus of attention; a chain of ordinary tasks themselves become a spiritual practice, a set of margins constantly edging forward, recomposing as they go.

But what, then, is the political import of Viola's 'slowly turning narratives'? I think it is threefold, with each succeeding element more important than the one before. One element is showing the complex process of mimesis by which we learn to generate affect. Viola is able, by slowing things down, to show how each element of the body (and most especially the face) takes its part in a show of emotion which has its own contested cultural history. He presents us with a kind of affective historical geography of expressive elements of the body like the face, maps of the way our bodies are socialized through mimesis[30] and other processes from birth onward which have been created over many centuries, quite literally producing a release of meanings from the past. The mapping of the spatial play of affect may not be particularly original,[31] but Viola does it beautifully, using all the aesthetic cues that have come down to us as cultural signifiers of intensity which we learn from infancy on. In turn, the audiences react to their own processes of emotional learning, playing these corporeal 'memories' back in their body and very often amplifying them through the step-by-step process of Viola's depictions in ways which may legitimately be described as therapeutic.

Then, second, Viola embeds affect in space and time. His sets, whether they are an iconic human face, a country walk or a house in flood are carefully cued spatial and temporal transformations which resist the reading–writing–text paradigm but are still comprehensible to a critically alert audience as various forms of (e)motion. Their visual 'vocabulary' cracks open familiar horizons of space and time and shows the way that wheres can also be elsewheres, and how these new alignments might offer new affective resonances and resources. By operating on space and time (stretching, transforming, miniaturizing) they become a kind of threshing floor for the emotions from which new instinctual traffic may come. Kracauer once argued that film was a redemptive art of estrangement that could put us back in touch with reality (Carter, 2002).[32] Too grand a statement, no doubt. But, in Viola's case, it seems to bear some relevance to his ambitions (cf. Viola, 2003).

Third, Viola is able to show something about the elementary affective forms of the modern world as they are produced on screens and then transmitted into urban bodies and other byways as a kind of visceral shorthand existing only in very small subliminal spaces and times. Marcus (2002) puts it well when he writes: 'When a movie has become part of the folklore of a nation, the borders between the movie and the nation cease to exist. The movie becomes a fable; then it becomes a metaphor. Then it becomes a catch-phrase, a joke, a shortcut.' Viola shows us all the affective catch-phrases, jokes and short-cuts that typify Western cultures but through slow motion and close-up restores them to their original step-by-step nature so that we can see them at work. They may be difficult to describe in words since they are non-representational but we can still detect them through Viola's laying out of the minute and diagrammatic clues we usually work on in everyday life as something more akin to large signposts (Ginzburg, 1992).

Of course, what Viola points to is not regular politics but, unless the matter of how we are made to be/be connected is to be regarded as somehow out of court, what he is focusing on is surely an intensely political process, one which matters to people. Without this kind of affective politics, what is left of politics will too often be the kind of macho programme-making that emaciates what it is to be human – because it is so sure it already knows what that is or will be.

Conclusions

So let me briefly conclude. There is more to the world than is routinely acknowledged in too many writings on politics and this excess is not just incidental. It points in the direction of fugitive work in

the social sciences and humanities which can read the little, the messy and the jerry-rigged as a part of politics and not just incidental to it. It points as well in the direction of work that wants to give up the ancient settlement between knowledge and passions (and nature and culture, and people and things, and truth and force) in favour of considering what ties things together as an explicit politics (Stengers, 1997). I think we live in exciting times because these two 'traditions' have become mixed up, most especially in experiments in thinking about the politics of encountering the spaces of cities which we are only at the start of laying out and working with.

In particular, I would want to end with the work currently being undertaken as a result of alliances between social sciences and artists. The marriage of science and the arts is often called 'engineering', and this seems to me to be the right term for the kind of theoretical-practical knowledges that are now being derived, ad hoc[33] knowledges of the ad hoc which can simultaneously change our engagements with the world. In struggling to represent some of the issues dealt with in this paper the foundations of a new kind of cultural engineering are gradually being constructed upon which and with which new forms of political practice that value democracy as functional disunity will be able to be built. I have heard a number of commentators argue that these kinds of engineering experiments are essentially trivial and that we need to get back to the 'real' stuff. I am not persuaded. I am not persuaded at all. It seems to me that *no choice has to be made*. We need to pursue many of the older forms of politics and the political as vigorously as before but we also need the 'research and development' that will allow us to expand the envelope of the political and so both restore the spaces of moral and political reflection that 'man' has collapsed and bring new forms of politics into being. If we don't do it, others most surely will.

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Notes

1. This paper was occasioned by a challenge from Doreen Massey to think more seriously about the politics of affect. This I have tried to do!
2. This emotional labour can turn up in unexpected places. Take the example of the trading floors of large investment banks: 'traders frequently and consistently speak of the need to manage emotions, they develop routines for dealing with these emotions, and they consider emotion management part of the expertise and savvy of professional trading' (Knorr Cetina and Bruegger, 2002, p. 400). The last three examples are all taken from Katz's (1999) seminal book.
3. Why, for example, are there no studies of cities of tears or laughter which do not approach these subjects as other things?
4. Virtues like courage, stamina and bravery arise from restraing one's immediate desires. Another good illustration of this point is Sophocles' *Antigone*, in which, in a medium that Plato deplores, similar criticisms arise (Butler, 2002). Antigone's claim to a right to grieve and bury her traitorous brother corrupts the state from within as the spectacle erodes public judgement.
5. Of course, there are emotions through the history of philosophy which have been considered politically virtuous. Love for wisdom was an affect that even Plato (in *The Symposium*) wanted to separate from the dangerous madness of love and other such waywardnesses. Hegel mentioned love and generosity as desirable emotions. And so on.
6. A good review of both areas is provided by Reddy (2001). It seems likely that there are, in fact, some emotional states which are common to all societies at all times (e.g. shame) but, equally, there are some states which are massively at variance.
7. For example, Ekman's work was strongly influenced by that of Tomkins on the face. Deleuze's work was influenced by Guattari's indebtedness to Bateson. And the ghosts of Gregory Bateson and Charles Darwin lurk in the background fairly constantly.
8. These bodily resources are manifold and many of them have not been fully considered. For example, one of the most potent means of bodily communication is clearly touch. It can, according to the type of encounter, produce feelings of affection and joy, and equally feelings of insecurity and inhibition (Montagu, 1986; Field, 2001). Touch in turn leads on to consideration of the hand as the chief touching organ, a haptic extension which has great biological-cultural complexity (think only of the handshake or the salute or clapping, the various means of writing or the lover's touch) (see Tallis, 2003). In turn, development of the hand seems to have been a crucial factor in the development of our brain. Similar chains of affect/intelligence/development can be found for, for example, smell and balance (see Thrift, 2003).
9. Thus, for Tomkins, affects *are* the correlated responses (involving the facial muscles, the viscera, the respiratory system, the skeleton, changes in blood flow, vocalizations, and so on) that an organism makes to a situation, which produce an analogue of the particular gradient or intensity of stimulation impinging upon it.
10. Sedgwick (2003) gives the example of enjoyment of a piece of music leading to wanting to hear it over and over again, listening to other music or even training to become a musician oneself.
11. Tomkins also thought voice and breathing were crucial.
12. In a famous passage from the *Ethics* Spinoza puts this proposition baldly:

    The mind and body are one and the same thing, which is

> conceived now under the attribute of thought, now under the attribute of extension. Whence it comes about that the order of the concatenation of things is one, or, nature is conceived now under this, now under that attribute, and consequently that the order of actions and passions of our body is simultaneous in nature with the order of actions and passions of our mind.
>
> (*Ethics*, III, prop.2, note)

13. Other emotions we might identify such as shame and embarrassment, do not seem to have common facial expressions.
14. Ekman (1998, p. 387) goes on to write: 'I believe that much of the initial emotion-specific physiological activity in the first few milliseconds of an emotional experience is also not penetrable by social experience', a statement which I am sure is not correct, as may be inferred from what comes later in the paper, but this does not mean that I would want to deny the influence of biology.
15. A term which refers to the thesis that we now live in a 'post-social' world in which social principles and relations are 'emptying out' and being replaced by other cultural elements and relationships, and most notably objects.

> Postsocial theory analyses the phenomenon of a disintegrating 'traditional' social universe, the reasons for this disintegration and the direction of changes. It attempts to conceptualise postsocial relations as forms of sociality which challenge core concepts of human interaction and solidarity, but which nonetheless constitute forms of binding self and other. The changes also affect human sociality in ways which warrant a detailed analysis in their own right.
>
> (Knorr Cetina, 2001, p. 520)

16. For example, it is relatively easy to generate such emotions as fear by dint of this kind of detail (see Altheide, 2002).
17. For example, interpreting sadness as a sickness.
18. Thus, increasingly, modern educational and training systems stress the need for adaptability and creativity – but within very narrowly defined parameters. They often use performance knowledges to inculcate these values (see Thrift, 2003).
19. Of course, none of this brief explication of the so-called 'half-second delay' is meant to suggest that conscious awareness is just along for the ride. Rather, we might say that the preconscious comes to be more highly valued and, at the same time, conscious awareness is repositioned as a means of focusing and sanctioning action.
20. I will take up this phrase again in considering the work of Bill Viola.
21. I think here about the way in which the work of choreographers such as Wigman and Laban was put to the service of mass political events during the Nazi period in Germany.
22. For example, what does it mean to argue for the emancipation of emotional labour (Smith, 2002)?
23. It is no accident that so many authors have turned to Buddhism for inspiration (cf. Varela, 1999; Sedgwick, 2003).
24. Subheading taken from a video disk made by Bill Viola in 1986 (see Viola, 1995).
25. A good example here is the rise of morphing which provides a visible flux of becoming. Significantly for affect, much of the work in this area has concentrated on the face (see Sobchack, 2000).
26. There are obvious forebears for this project apart from Fourier such as Teilhard de Chardin, James Lovelock and Gregory Bateson.
27. As Sobchack (2000, p. 185) puts it:

> A human face ... can be seen with a clarity and dimension impossible in 'ordinary' unmediated, lived-body vision. If I get too physically close to another, the other's face loses its precise visible presence as a figure in my visual field even as it increases its haptic presence. The visible face partially blurs as it fills my visual field, thus becoming, in part, its ground. Indeed some of the face flows into indeterminacy and the final invisibility that marks the horizon of my perceptive act. An extreme close-up of a human mediated for me by the projector ... is given to the experience transformed. It is centered in my visual field .... Its entirety is the figure of my perception, not its ground, and thus does not flow into indeterminacy in my vision.

28. Viola's work has been heavily criticised by some for, for example, its hackneyed aesthetic, its parasitism of great works of art, its attraction to a narrow spectrum of affects, and so on. These may or may not be valid criticisms but I am more interested in why Viola's work is able to elicit strong emotional reactions in the first place.
29. Often extreme slow motion. For example, film is often shot at 300fps and played back at 30fps.
30. It is worth remembering that in its original Greek form mimesis meant performance (understood as enactment and re-enactment rather than imitation) and, of course, mimesis is still very rarely the production of an exact copy (Rush, 1999).
31. Slow-motion film of the face has been a constant in artwork for some time, but I think Viola has managed to get the right speed, unlike some earlier, interminable experiments.
32. 'It effectively assists us in discovering the material world with its psychophysical correspondences. We literally redeem this world from its dormant state, its state of virtual non-existence, by endeavouring to experience it through the camera. And we are free to experience it because we are fragmented' (Kracauer, 1960, p. 300).
33. In using this term, I mean to imply the way in which engineering is always born out of concrete encounters which allow the world to speak back; I am not trying to imply that engineering is just make-it-up-on-the-spot.

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